

**Ethiopia Interfaith Forum for Development Dialogue and Action
(EIFDDA)**

Interreligious Peace Dialogues

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Holleta City, Ethiopia



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Background



EIFDDA- Established 2006 and renewed its license in 2019 as per new Ethiopian Civil Society Proclamation. It is a Consortium of major Faith Based Organization (FBOs) in Ethiopia; with long standing developmental experiences and significant vast presence throughout the country. EIFDDA aimed to engage in the generation of a religion-inspired conception and practice of development, which can be an alternative to the mainstream materialistic model of development. It envisioned achieving its aim by engaging its members and partners in the complementary and mutually reinforcing learning processes of dialogues and discussions on substantive issues relating to mainstreaming religious values in development. EIFDDA is serving as Interfaith Platforms for partnership and linking, systematic learning, capacity building, advocacy and lobbying, fundraising among others.



EIFDDA is currently implementing the Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA) with other Faith Based Organizations from diverse Religious denominations including Orthodox, Muslim, Protestant, and Catholic as well as traditional belief groups (Aba Gedas). JISRA works within religious communities to challenge discrimination, extremist tendencies, and hate towards others (intrareligious sphere); facilitate and strengthen bridges between religious communities by encouraging interreligious action and addressing common grievances (interreligious sphere); and most importantly it seeks to maintain a focus on women and youth and on building the body of knowledge and evidence around FoRB (Cross Cutting sphere).



Among many events during the last couple of years, EIFDDA has utilized International days and hosted various programs for creating shared understanding and information exchange among interfaith groups. This year, during the World Interfaith Harmony (WIHW) week, EIFDDA in collaboration with other Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) has hosted a program as part of commemorating “WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK (WIHW)” to highlight the importance of interfaith cooperation, and its role in conflict prevention and Peacebuilding among Faith Leaders, in which religious actors are sustainable advocates interfaith peace and building resilient and inclusive communities.

Succinct Report

Ethiopia has been facing various challenges including **intra-religious** intolerance which is leading to increased instances of violent confrontation. There is an increase in **inter-religious** violence in areas across the country including violence targeting the construction of specific places of worship or during religious celebrations and there is also limited interaction between different faith group's that fuels mistrust and other many problems.



PHOTO: Christian and Muslim Leaders holding "Interreligious Peace and Harmony Dialogue" to address religious challenges in their localities_ commemorating #WIHW _ West Shewa Zone, Oromia Region, Ambo City, Ethiopia

As part of ongoing program through the Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Aciont (JISRA), **On February 3rd, 2023**, a one day "Interreligious Peace Dialogue" undertaken to commomorate [#WorldInterfaithHarmonyWeek](#) in West Shewa Zone of Oromia Region, Ethiopia.

The theme of the event was “Strengthening Interfaith Harmony and Collaboration to find Solutions for Challenges related to Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) and Interfaith relationship”. Over 40 faith and traditional belief leaders including Orthodox, Muslim, Protestant, Catholic as well as traditional leaders (Aba Gedas) have been attended and sensitized on #WIHW, FoRB and Social Cohesion for fostering understanding and cooperation between different religious / cultural /ethnic groups.



PHOTO: Faith Leaders and Traditional Leaders making separate group discussion on what they do like from Muslims community, what they don't like and other questions just before they come in plenary

Following Intensive Dialogue, participants vowed to work together in Harmony for resolving religious conflicts and tensions; and building sustainable peace in their localities. The event was instrumental for assessing interfaith relationships and identifying issues among the community, and device local solutions working together with mutual respect for promoting FoRB and Interfaith Relationship among divided communities

By doing so, religious leaders has established an “Interfaith Advocacy Network Group” as local system which will further helping peple connect across religious communities and within.

A religious leader speaks during the event:-

“ Not only tolerance and understanding among ourselves, but we have to work in Harmony for having peaceful community and country ”



Photo: Group Pictures of Interfaith Advocacy Network

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IEC/BCC materials like Banner, Flyers utilized during the event and the event was communicated through social media including Twitter, which has gained positive comments from internal as well as external audiences.